

GREEN BROOK FLOOD CONTROL COMMISSION
NEWSLETTER
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WHY THE CORPS OF ENGINEERS? =====

Why do we have to follow the rules of the Corps of Engineers in choosing a way to prevent flood damage?

We come up with good ideas, such as moving all the people out, and you say it cannot be done because of the rules of the Corps of Engineers.

WHY DO WE HAVE TO DO IT THE CORPS WAY? =====

The answer is: We don't have to do it the Corps way.

A municipality can do whatever they choose to prevent damages from future drastic floods. Provided that they can get the permission of the NJDEP.

As a practical matter, a single municipality normally has to obtain the cooperation of other municipalities upstream from them.

Without action all along the river, it can be difficult or even impossible for the towns farther down river to protect themselves.

So normally, a flood damage reduction project involves several municipalities, or even several counties.

BUT WHY DO THEY HAVE TO FOLLOW THE RULES OF THE CORPS? =====

They don't have to follow the Federal rules.

If a group of municipalities and counties get the OK of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, they can make their own rules.

BUT, WHERE DOES THE MONEY COME FROM? =====

That is the rub. The money. If the municipalities and/or counties can finance the protection plan themselves, they can forget about the Federal rules.

However, if they want the Federal Government to pay the bulk of the cost, the price is: You must follow the Federal Rules.

WHAT ARE THE FEDERAL RULES?

One of the most basic rules is: The money benefits of the project must be greater than the money cost of the project (both figured on an average annual basis over the life of the project).

Another tough rule: If there are several ways to do the job, and all of them produce more benefits than cost (the so-called Benefit to Cost Ratio, or B/C Ratio), you must pick the one which provides the **greatest net benefits** over and above its costs.

And there are a few hundred other rules and regulations.

WHAT ARE THE OTHER FEDERAL RULES?

You must follow the procedures of the NEPA Act of 1969 (Public Hearings open to all - not limited just to those who will suffer in the next big flood; public comments, response documents, Record of Decision, Federal reviews by several agencies.)

And bookcases of thick rulebooks from Washington.

All of this adds up to years and years of time to struggle through.

MORE FEDERAL RULES

The Federal rules require a "non-Federal Sponsor" to sign a binding contract with Washington to be part of the project. In most cases, this is the State.

So, you pay your money and you get your choice.

Or, more accurately, if you do not pay your money (the whole amount), you do not get your choice.

If the Federal and State government together are paying the bulk of the cost (more than 90% in the case of the Green Brook Flood Control Project), you are stuck with their rules.

THE CHOICE WAS MADE

The three Counties (Middlesex, Somerset and Union) and the Municipalities in the Green Brook Basin have made that choice. Years ago in fact.

We want the Federal and State money. The price is: For the \$350 million plus which the Federal and State governments are scheduled to put into protection for us in the Green Brook Basin, we have had to accept the reality that it's got to be done their way.

IT'S NOW A REALITY

The Counties of Middlesex, Somerset and Union, and the Municipalities within the Basin, acting through the Commission they created for that purpose, have now made the beginning of flood protection a reality.

Construction has actually begun.

It will take plenty of further effort to achieve the end result we all want. Congress must be convinced to continue to appropriate money each year.

And, the New Jersey Legislature and the Governor must be convinced of the importance of their yearly appropriation.

But with the support of the people, acting through their Municipal and County governments, and the Green Brook Flood Control Commission which they created, it can be done. And, happily, it is **now being done**.